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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 SY-05 SYE-00 MCT-02
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8310
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

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E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS SHUM AR
SUBJECT REAPPEARANCES REPORTED

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
() Release ☒ Excise () Deny
Exemption(s): B1
Declassify: ☒ In Part () In Full
☒ Classify as C () Extend as () Downgrade to
Date 9/24/01 Declassify on Reason 25X1

1. BUENOS AIRES HUMAN RIGHTS CIRCLES ARE AWASH WITH REPORTS OF REAPPEARANCES OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS. THE HARDEST INFORMATION COMES FROM PRISONERS IN LA PLATA AND VILLA DEVOTO PRISONS WHERE 24 MEN AND 15 WOMEN RESPECTIVELY HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO HAVE APPEARED.

2. MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ☒ AFFIRMED TO EMBASSY OFFICERS LAST WEEK THAT AMONG 220 PRISONERS BEING TRANSFERRED FROM THE III CORPS AREA WERE 40 TO 60 PERSONS NOT UNDER EXECUTIVE (PEN) DETENTION, BUT RATHER AT THE DISPOSITION OF THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES (DAM'S), IE DISAPPEARED ☒ NOTED THAT THESE DAM PRISONERS WOULD NOT BE PLACED UNDER PEN, BUT UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF MILITARY COURTS.

3. REAPPEARANCE NUMBERS CIRCULATING AMONG THE HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS ARE OVER A HUNDRED. ☒ SUGGESTED TO EMBASSY THAT NUMBER OF REAPPEARANCES MAY RUN AS HIGH AS 300 PERSONS.

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4. ASSOCIATED WITH GROUP REAPPEARANCE REPORTS ARE THE FOLLOWING UNCONFIRMED ALLEGATIONS FROM

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HUMAN RIGHTS SOURCES:

A) THE CLANDESTINE AND PEN PRISONERS WERE ALL SEVERLY BEATEN BEFORE LEAVING THE III CORPS AREA BY PRISON GUARDS. VILLA DEVOTO PRISON AUTHORITIES REFUSED TO ACCEPT A NUMBER OF TRANSFERRED PRISONERS DUE TO THEIR POOR PHYSICAL CONDITION.

B) WOMEN PRISONERS ARRIVING AT VILLA DEVOTO PRISON HAD NOT BEEN FED OR ALLOWED TO DRINK DURING THEIR SEVERAL DAYS OF TRANSIT FROM CORDOBA PROVINCE. UPON ARRIVAL IN DEVOTO THEY ATE EVERY PIECE OF FOOD AVAILABLE IN THE CELL BLOCK.

C) THE DEVOTO AND LA PLATA PRISONERS REPORTEDLY TOLD JAIL MATES THAT THEY HAD BEEN HELD CAPTIVE SECRETLY AND WERE BLINDFOLDED AND FOOT CHAINED DURING THE ENTIRE PERIOD OF THEIR CAPTIVITY IN CORDOBA. SOME OF THE WOMEN SAID THAT THEY HAD BEEN HELD AT LA PERLA AND LA RIBERA DETENTION CENTERS NEAR CORDOBA. THE MALE PRISONERS SAID THEY WERE HELD WITH ABOUT 700 OTHER PRISONERS IN THE BANFIELD QUILMES AREA.

D) MOST PRISONERS HAD BEEN HELD CAPTIVE FOR 6 TO 9 MONTHS, BUT SOME HAD BEEN HELD PRISONER FOR OVER TWO YEARS.

5. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH SOME REAPPEARANCES HAVE TAKEN
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PLACE OF "DESAPARECIDOS" SINCE THE END OF THE JUNE WORLD CUP, THESE HAVE BEEN INDIVIDUAL CASES OF PERSONS HALE CLANDESTINELY FOR VARYING LENGTHS OF TIME RANGING UP TO TWO AND ONE HALF YEARS. THERE HAVE BEEN NO PREVIOUS REPORTS OF GROUPS OF CLANDESTINE PRISONERS REAPPEARING.

6. A PLANNED LARGE SCALE TRANSFER OF PEN PRISONERS FROM CORDOBA WAS GIVEN [REDACTED] AS THE REASONS FOR POSTPONING ITS SCHEDULED DECEMBER SITE VISITS TO III CORPS PRISONS. THIS NOW APPEARS TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE WITH A DIVIDEND OF SURFACING SOME DISAPPEARED.

B)

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7. WE HAVE HEARD REPORTS THAT BOTH LA RIBERA AND LA PERLA INTERROGATION/DETENTION CENTERS IN CORDOBA WERE BEING CLOSED. HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION GROUPS SPECULATE THAT THIS WAS BEING DONE AS III CORPS COMMANDER MENENDEZ DID NOT WANT PRISONERS IN THE CHILEAN "BATTLE FRONT" ZONE.

8. ARGENTINE ARMY INTELLIGENCE SOURCES CONTINUE TO DENY TO US, HOWEVER, THAT THERE ARE LARGE CONCENTRATIONS OF OLD "DISAPPEARED" PRISONERS STASHED AROUND THE COUNTRY AT CLANDESTINE SITES. ACCORDING TO THESE SOURCES, THOSE CURRENTLY BEING HELD CLANDESTINELY ARE FOR THE MOST PART EITHER RELATIVELY RECENTLY DISAPPEARED PERSONS OR TERRORISTS "TURNAROUNDS" (IE EX-SUBVERSIVES WHO HAVE BEEN COLLABORATING SECRETLY WITH THE SECURITY SERVICES). WHILE THESE PARTICULAR SOURCES STATED THAT THEY WERE UNAWARE OF RECENT LARGE-SCALE TRANSFERS OR REAPPEARANCES, THEY SPECULATED THAT ANY REAPPEARANCES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE RECENTLY ARE OF INDIVIDUALS RECENTLY DISAPPEARED (EG PSYCHOLOGIST ALFREDO SMITH AND WIFE -- SEE SEPTTEL) OR SUBVERSIVE REHABILITEES OR TURNAROUNDS
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WHO ARE BEING OFFICIALLY RESURFACED AND ACKNOWLEDGED AS PRISONERS OF THE STATE.

9. WE WILL CONTINUE TO CHECK INTO THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE. END COMMENT.
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